

**Remarks/Arguments:**

Claims 1-5, 8-11, 13-16, 18-20, 23, 26 and 29-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Underwood et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,737,464) ("Underwood"). Claims 12, 21-27 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Underwood.

Upon entry of the instant amendment, claims 1-25 and 29-33 are pending. Claims 26-29 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 13 and 29 have been amended to more clearly and particularly point out the invention.

It is respectfully submitted that the claims as amended are not taught, suggested or implied by Underwood. In particular, Underwood discloses a device known typically as a coupler. Known couplers provide passageways in which two connectors may be brought together and aligned. (col. 1, lines 35-37). Underwood simply takes a known coupler and modifies the sleeve portion (col. 3, lines 38-54), but still functions as an alignment device for aligning two fiber optic connectors so that both connectors continue to communicate directly with each other.

In contrast, Applicant's device includes an intermediate positioned replaceable connector that sits between an internal and external device. The replaceable connector includes at least one optical fiber for carrying a signal originated by the external device to the internal device and vice-versa. Thus, the intermediate device carries or relays signal between the external and internal devices. The internal and external devices do not communicate directly with each other.

Clearly Underwood teaches away from Applicant's invention in that it requires that the optical connectors be properly aligned such that the signal passes directly from connector to connector and that the two connectors do indeed communicate directly.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's objections have been obviated. Accordingly, Applicants believe that the application is in condition for allowance, which allowance is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,  
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